



Influence of Socio-Economic and Tripography Variables on Mudumalai Wildlife Tourism

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the factors influencing tourists to visit Mudumalai Region in India and explore the differences in opinion among various demographic and tripographic variables affecting wildlife tourism. The study focuses on factors such as jeep/elephant safari, animal watching/sighting, mountain scenery, wildlife watching, visiting elephant camps, bird watching, and museum visits. Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire from Mudumalai tourists, with 400 finalized samples for analysis. Descriptive statistics, independent sample t-tests, and one-way ANOVA were employed for data analysis. The findings provide insights into the demographic and tripographic characteristics of Mudumalai tourists, informing strategies to enhance the tourism experience and cater to diverse needs.

Key Words: Socio-Economic variables; Tripography variables; Mudumalai; Wildlife Tourism

INTRODUCTION

Nature-based tourism can be considered as a tourism activity that happens in natural areas. Nature-based tourism is defined as "Tourism that is directly or indirectly

dependent on natural resources" (Research Services, Tourism Columbia). Buckley 2005, defines nature tourism as "All forms of tourism where natural environments are from the primary attraction or setting". Tourism has gone through several changes all over the years; among the world industries, it is considered to be one of the fastest growing. In India, Nature-Based Tourism stands at 10th in the world (World Economic Forum). Nature-based tourism receives 8 billion nature-based tourists every year, and it generates around 600 billion dollars' worth of business every year (UNWTO). According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (2019), wildlife tourism contributes 4.2 % to direct expenditure globally and generates 6.8% of employment globally.

Local community people benefit from nature-based tourism because of the employment generated out of the NBT, such as selling souvenirs to tourists, selling tourism products and services, and running tourism business ventures in the destination. The tourists traveling to nature-based tourism destinations are likely to have pro-environmental behaviour when compared with tourists who are traveling to enjoy few other forms of tourism such as heritage tourism, culture tourism and cuisine tourism, etc. Crouch et al. (2005) found out that environmentally caring tourists have a discreet tripographic profile as they will be in their 45 – 55 of age, spend less money on the destinations while choosing the various components, refer to guidebooks to collect information about the destination for their vacation. Nature-loving tourists are motivated by factors such as nature, free-easy-going atmosphere, cultural aspects, lifestyle, and sports, and they also avoid regular crowded destinations.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Martin et al. (2020) have stated that wildlife tourism is a way to get connected with nature. According to him, it also builds a psychological relationship with nature. The increased connectedness with nature also results in the positive well-being of individuals (Lackey et al., 2019). Apart from visiting sanctuaries and protected areas, wildlife tourism also covers broad aspects covering various activities like animals or bird watching, photography, entertainment activities like safaris, circuses, fishing, etc. (Jessica Bell Rizzolo, 2021; Meyer Lauren et al., 2021) have also pointed out the challenges faced in framing a management plan to balance conservation, animal welfare, and extreme concerns over tourists' satisfaction and economic values.

Ma et al. (2021) have discovered the relationships between tourists' socio-demographic characteristics, travel motivation, and satisfaction to predict their travel patterns and behaviours. The relationship and interest the tourists have in wildlife tourism are based on their previous trip experiences (Fortin et al., 2016).

Socio-demographic influences of the tourists

Visitors' motivation and expectations are addressed in several ways. Tourists rate their trips based on their past experience visiting the destination. They judge their experience based on their past recreational activities (Jacqueline et al., 2020).

The major factors that influence tourists to visit wildlife sanctuaries are their thirst for recreation, knowledge, and appreciation of nature. It makes them feel even closer to nature and wildlife settings (Mutanga et al., 2017). Aziz et al. (2018) have discussed how a family's gender, age, and financial sources decide their travel pattern. Moreover, they have also described how the length of their stays will determine their demographic characteristics in travel.

Tripographic variables

Poon et al. (2017) determined the characteristics of the tourists to be associated with intentions to use the accommodation based on their previous experience, accommodation preference, travel personality, and tripography variables. The decisions made by the tourists reflect their prior experience with the trips.

The characteristics of the tourists can be best evaluated with two factors – based on their previous travel experience and post-trip consumption. So, Kim et al. (2021) have also evaluated the post-accommodation consumption of tourists in their works. When it comes to choosing an accommodation, the driving factors that force tourists to decide on lodging based on the tourists' tripographics, prior travel experiences, socio-demographic patterns, and the level of security in the region (Yang et al., 2019)

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to understand the factors that influence tourists to visit Mudumalai tourist places with the study factors and also identify the various demographic and Tripography variables that influence Mudumalai wildlife tourism.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The primary data was collected from Mudumalai wildlife tourism with a structured questionnaire. Based on the review of the literature, the questionnaire was prepared, which focused on jeep/elephant safari, animal watching, sighting, mountain scenery, wildlife watching, visiting elephant camp, bird watching, and museum during the visiting Mudumalai are selected as the study factors. The convenience sample technique was adopted during the data collection period. Around 450 samples were collected from the Mudumalai tourists; due to the missing value, 400 samples were finalized for data analysis and interpretation. Descriptive statistics, independent sample t-test, and one-way ANOVA were used to analyze the data with the help of Excel and SPSS software.

The demographic profile of Mudumalai tourists is given in the below table. It was found that most of the tourists belong to the male category, with 62% and 40% of respondents being between 26 and 35 years old. Around 63% of people are married and have completed graduate degrees, and 45% of them are working in engineering-related jobs (20%). It was found that most of them work in the private sector (47%), and most of them earn an average of 1-3 lakhs annually (40%). Around 90% of tourists are coming from India (i.e., domestic tourists). Furthermore, it was found that 64% of tourists belonged to Tamil Nadu. Around 47 % of the tourists work in the private sector, and almost 40% of the tourists' annual income is between 1 – 3 Lakhs rupees. The majority of the tourists are Indians (90%), and the remaining 10 % of the tourists are foreigners.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Mudumalai Tourist

Gender	No. of Tourist	Percentage of Tourist
Male	250	62.5
Female	150	37.5
Age		
18 – 25 years old	136	34
26 – 35	159	39.8
36 – 45	74	18.5
46 – 55	19	4.8
56 – 65	10	2.5
Above 65 years old	02	0.5
Marital Status		
Single	147	36.8
Married	253	63.3
Educational Qualification		

Higher Secondary	35	8.8
Diploma	15	3.8
Graduate	182	45.5
Postgraduate	130	32.5
Doctorate	18	4.5
Others	20	05
Nature of Employment		
Self Employed	91	23.3
Public Sector	52	13
Government	62	15.5
Private Sector	189	47.3
Occupation		
Agriculture	10	2.5
Business	42	10.5
Corporate Executive	22	5.5
Engineer	82	20.5
Teacher	40	10
Doctor	14	3.5
Lawyer	10	2.5
Manager	30	7.5
Executive	17	4.3
Student	45	11.3
Housewife	27	6.8
Retired	02	0.5
Self-Employed	15	3.8
Others	44	11
Annual Income		
1 - 3 Lakhs ₹ (Indian Rupees)	159	39.8
3 - 6 Lakhs ₹ (Indian Rupees)	103	25.8
6 - 9 Lakhs ₹ (Indian Rupees)	43	10.8
9 - 12 Lakhs ₹ (Indian Rupees)	46	11.5
Above 12 Lakhs ₹ (Indian Rupees)	49	12.3
Place of Origin		
India	360	90
Foreign	40	10
Origin of Country		
Britain	12	3.0
Holland	03	0.8
India	360	90.0
Netherlands	08	2.0
Scotland	10	2.5
Sweden	02	0.5
Türkiye	03	0.8
United States of America	02	0.5

Britain	12	3.0
Holland	03	0.8
Origin Place		
Karnataka	57	14.3
Kerala	10	2.5
Madhya Pradesh	07	1.8
Maharashtra	25	6.3
Tamil Nadu	256	64
West Bengal	05	1.3

Around 60% of tourists came to know about the Mudumalai as a tourist spot through their friends and relatives. It was found that most of the tourists travel along with their families 65%, and most of the itinerary plans were prepared by the tourists themselves. Most of the trips are self-sponsored trips, and they spend their own money visiting Mudumalai. Around 77% of tourists are free individual travelers. More than half of the tourists, around 62% of tourists, are visiting Mudumalai for the first time, and (59%) of tourists visit Mudumalai only one time. Around 38% of the tourists visit Mudumalai for various purposes, such as wildlife watching, and 24 % of the tourists revealed that they like to visit Mudumalai to enjoy nature. Nearly half of the tourists travel in hired vehicles, and around 40% of the tourists access Mudumalai by their cars. Around 27% of tourists are likely to stay in resort-type accommodations, 28% of tourists are likely to stay a minimum of two days in Mudumalai, and 38% of tourists spend 5-10 thousand during the Mudumalai trip. Most of the tourists prefer to travel with their families to Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, and a fourth of the tourists are Free Individual Travelers.

Table 2: Tripographic Profile of Mudumalai Tourist

Source of Information about Mudumalai	No. of	Percentage of
Friends and Relatives	241	60.3
Tourism Websites	53	13.3
Trip Advisor	30	7.5
Social Networking Sites	20	5.0
Travel Agent and Tour Operator	24	6.0
Movies/ Documentaries/ Serials/ News Channel	15	3.8
Others	17	4.3
Travel or Travelling with		
Alone	14	3.5
Family	262	65.5
Friends & Relatives	109	27.3
Colleagues	10	2.5

Others	05	1.3
Trip Arrangement		
Self	236	59.0
Tour / Travel Agency	41	10.3
Friends & Relatives	109	27.3
Hotel	14	3.5
Trip Sponsored by		
LTC	67	16.8
Self	311	77.8
Sponsored	22	5.5
Tour Type		
Package Tour	61	15.3
Customized Tour for GIT / FIT	43	10.8
Free Individual Traveler	296	74.0
Frequency of Visit		
First time Visitor	248	62.0
Repeat Visitor	152	38.0
Frequency of Visit (Visit Number)		
First Time	237	59.3
2 times	22	5.5
3 times	55	13.8
4 times	32	8.0
5 times	34	8.5
7 times	10	2.5
10 times	05	1.3
More than 10 times	05	1.3
Purpose of Visit		
Wildlife Watching	150	37.5
Adventure	66	16.5
Rest and Relaxation	29	7.3
Vacation	60	15.0
To enjoy nature	95	23.8
Choice of Transport		
Own car	151	37.8
Tourist Cab	173	43.3
Bus	02	0.5
Contract Carrier	27	6.8
Rail	05	1.3
Motor Bike	35	8.8
Others	07	1.8
Choice of Accommodation		
Own Private Guest House	85	21.3
Budget Hotel	67	16.8
Government Guest House	32	8.0
Resort	107	26.8
Luxury Hotel	74	18.5

Friends and Relative home	25	6.3
Youth Hostel	05	1.3
Others	05	1.3
Length of Stay		
1 Day	91	22.8
2 Days	114	28.5
3 Days	103	25.8
4 Days	59	14.8
More than 4 Days	33	8.3
Budget of the Trip		
Less than 5000 ₹	57	14.3
5000 – 10000 ₹	155	38.8
10001 – 30000 ₹	126	31.5
30001 – 60000 ₹	45	11.3
60001 – 90000 ₹	12	3.0
90001 – 120000 ₹	05	1.3

The source of information about Mudumalai is that the majority of tourists (60.3%) rely on friends and relatives. Tourism websites are the second most popular source, accounting for 13.3% of tourists' information. Trip Advisor and social networking sites contribute 7.5% and 5.0%, respectively, while travel agents and tour operators are relied upon by 6.0% of tourists. Movies, documentaries, serials, and news channels also play a role in influencing tourists' decisions, accounting for 3.8% of visitors. Other sources contribute 4.3% collectively. In terms of travel arrangements, a significant number of tourists (59.0%) prefer to plan their trips themselves. Tour and travel agencies are responsible for organizing 10.3% of the trips, while friends and relatives arrange 27.3% of the visits. Hotels are the choice for trip arrangements for 3.5% of tourists. Regarding travel companions, the majority of tourists (65.5%) visit Mudumalai with their families. 27.3% prefer to travel with friends and relatives, 2.5% with colleagues, and 1.3% with others.

The dataset also reveals the purpose of the visit, with wildlife watching being the main motive for 37.5% of the tourists. Adventure activities attract 16.5% of visitors, while 7.3% seek rest and relaxation. They were vacationing and enjoying nature, accounting for 15.0% and 23.8% of visits, respectively. In terms of transportation, tourists mostly rely on their own cars (37.8%) or tourist cabs (43.3%) to explore Mudumalai. A small percentage (0.5%) opt for buses, while contract carriers, rail, motorbikes, and other modes of transport account for the remaining preferences. When it comes to accommodation

choices, private guest houses (21.3%) and resorts (26.8%) are the popular options among tourists. Budget hotels and luxury hotels are preferred by 16.8% and 18.5% of visitors, respectively. Friends' and relatives' homes, youth hostels, and other accommodations are chosen by a smaller percentage of tourists. The dataset also provides insights into the length of stay, with the majority of tourists spending either 1 day (22.8%) or 2 days (28.5%) in Mudumalai. 25.8% of visitors stay for 3 days, while 14.8% stay for 4 days. A smaller percentage (8.3%) extend their stay for more than 4 days. Lastly, the dataset includes information about the trip budget. The majority of tourists (38.8%) have a budget ranging from ₹ 5000 to ₹ 10000. 31.5% of tourists allocate a budget between ₹ 10001 and ₹ 30000. A smaller percentage of visitors have higher budgets, with 11.3% in the ₹ 30001 to ₹ 60000 range. Only a few tourists (3.0%) have budgets exceeding ₹ 60000. The dataset provides valuable insights into the preferences and behaviors of tourists visiting Mudumalai, including their sources of information, travel arrangements, travel companions, purpose of visit, choice of transport and accommodation, length of stay, and budget allocation. This information can help tourism authorities, businesses, and researchers understand and cater to the needs of tourists visiting Mudumalai.

The independent sample T-test was performed to find out the demographic variables that influence tourists' visits to Mudumalai wildlife tourism. Gender, marital status, and place of origin have been identified as group variables since there are only two groups. The study factors that have been determined based on the review of literature are jeep/elephant safari, animal watching, sighting, mountain scenery, wildlife watching, visiting elephant camp, bird watching, and museum are in interval scale which as selected as the test variable for the independent sample T-test.

Table 3: Result of Independent Sample T-Test with Mudumalai Tourist

Independent Sample T-Test		Jeep / Elephant Safari	Animal Watching /Sighting	Mountain scenery	Wildlife watching	Visiting Elephant Camp	Bird Watching	Museum
Gender	T-Value	-0.011	-1.183	-2.820**	0.711	-0.914	-1.067	-0.479
Marital Status	T-Value	-0.492	-0.749	0.556	-0.616	-2.101**	-0.661	-0.058
Place of Origin	T-Value	0.118	3.132***	-0.83	8.981***	2.566**	4.625***	-3.936***

Note: *** significant at 0.001 level; ** significant at 0.010 level; * significant at 0.050 level.

Based on the above table, it is found that there is a difference of opinion between gender and mountain scenery, as well as elephant camp visiting and marital status. However, the place of origin (i.e., domestic and international tourists) has differences of opinion in animal, wildlife, bird watching, elephant camp, and museum visits that are statistically significant at the 0.05 level. The remaining variables are found to be insignificant at the 0.05 level.

The one-way ANOVA was conducted to identify the significant difference between study factors and demographic variables. Here, age, education qualification, nature of employment, occupation, and annual income are selected as group variables with more than three groups. The study factors that have been identified based on the review of literature are jeep/elephant safari, animal watching, sighting, mountain scenery, wildlife watching, visiting elephant camp, bird watching, and museum are in interval scale which as selected as the test variable for the One-Way ANOVA. The main purpose of this ANOVA test is to find out demographic variables that influence tourists' visits to Mudumalai tourist places. The study factors are assessed based on the 5-point Likert scale (strongly agree to disagree strongly).

Table 4: Result of One-way ANOVA for the Study Factors and Demographic Variables

One-Way ANOVA		Jeep / Elephant Safari	Animal Watching /Sighting	Mountain scenery	Wildlife watching	Visiting Elephant Camp	Bird Watching	Museum
Age	F-Value	4.771***	6.369***	6.444***	6.946***	2.076*	1.171	5.210***
Education Qualification	F-Value	0.276	0.562	0.31	0.434	4.897**	0.484	0.004
Nature of Employment	F-Value	6.897***	3.526***	2.279*	2.873**	6.637***	5.160***	5.148***
Occupation	F-Value	3.808***	4.980***	3.613***	6.021***	4.517***	11.48***	10.44***
Annual Income	F-Value	7.820***	5.026***	13.722***	4.554**	3.151**	1.813	6.961***

Note: *** significant at 0.001 level; ** significant at 0.010 level; * significant at 0.050 level.

Based on the above ANOVA test, it was found that there was a difference of opinion among the age of tourists and annual income with all the study variables except bird watching. The educational qualification is significant with only the Elephant Camp visiting, whereas the nature of employment and occupation of tourists found almost all

study factors are highly statistically significant, as shown in the above table with the help of F-value, P-value, and level of significance.

The one-way ANOVA was performed to find out the significant difference between tripography variables and study factors. The tripography variables are the source of information about the Mudumalai, travel or traveling with, the trip is arranged by, the trip sponsored, type of tour, one important purpose of the visit, choice of transport, choice of accommodation, length of stay, trip budget are selected as group variables with more than three groups. The study factors that have been identified based on the review of literature are jeep/elephant safari, animal watching, sighting, mountain scenery, wildlife watching, visiting elephant camp, bird watching, and museum are in interval scale which as selected as the test variable for the One-Way ANOVA. The main purpose of this ANOVA test is to find out tripography variables that influence tourists to visit Mudumalai tourist places. The study factors are assessed based on the 5-point Likert scale (strongly agree to disagree strongly).

Table 5: Result of One-way ANOVA for the Study Factors and Tripography Variables

One-way ANOVA		Jeep / Elephant Safari	Animal Watching /Sighting	Mountain scenery	Wildlife watching	Visiting Elephant Camp	Bird Watching	Museum
Source of Information about	F-Value	3.029**	7.015***	3.548**	4.197***	3.460**	5.571***	3.994***
Travel or Travelling with	F-Value	11.689***	5.745***	5.577***	7.578***	4.483**	2.327	3.010**
Trip is Arranged by	F-Value	3.036**	5.688**	5.759**	5.611**	8.607***	3.818*	25.951***
Trip is Sponsored by	F-Value	0.461	7.801***	15.978***	31.285***	10.609***	7.933***	0.366
Type of tour	F-Value	0.277	5.574**	2.445*	13.053***	2.716*	12.083***	0.044
Purpose of the Visit	F-Value	8.193***	2.187*	7.614***	2.496**	5.600***	3.272*	0.999
Choice of Transport	F-Value	3.205**	4.982***	2.821**	5.761***	2.657**	2.692**	2.400**
Choice of Accommodation	F-Value	3.493**	4.918***	4.270***	10.947***	2.419**	3.855***	11.127***
Length of Stay	F-Value	3.514**	4.126**	1.716	3.803**	2.217*	1.517	4.184**
Budget for this Trip	F-Value	3.917**	5.232***	4.781***	3.376**	6.174***	6.476***	1.568

Note: *** significant at 0.001 level; ** significant at 0.010 level; * significant at 0.050 level.

Based on the above One-Way ANOVA test, it is found that there is a difference of opinion between the tripography variables and the study variables. All the study factors and the source of information, trip arrangement, trip budget, choice of transportation, and accommodation are highly statistically significant for the tourists to visit all the places of Mudumalai whereas, the length of stay and traveling with are also the difference of opinion with all the study factors except bird watching factor. Further, it was found that sponsored trips and tour types are also significant among the study factors, except for jeep/ elephant safari and museum visits. Further, the purpose of the visit is found to be substantial with all the study factors except the museum visit, as shown in the above table about the F-Value and level of significance.

FINDINGS

The study reveals that the majority of visitors to Mudumalai were males between the ages of 26 and 35. Most of these tourists were married, well-educated with graduate degrees, and employed in the private sector. Their average annual income ranged from 1 to 3 lakhs. The study further highlights that 90% of the tourists were domestic, primarily hailing from different parts of Tamil Nadu. Regarding the tripographic profile, it was found that friends and relatives served as the main source of information for tourists planning their visit to Mudumalai. The majority of tourists preferred to travel with their families, and self-arranged trips were the most common, followed by arrangements made by friends and relatives. Self-sponsorship was prevalent among the tourists, and a significant proportion were visiting Mudumalai for the first time, while 38% were repeat visitors. Wildlife watching emerged as the primary purpose of their visit, followed by a desire to enjoy nature. Hired vehicles, such as tourist cabs, were the preferred mode of transportation for nearly half of the tourists, and resorts were the popular choice for accommodation. On average, tourists stayed for 2-3 days, with a significant portion spending between 5,000-10,000 rupees for their trip.

The study also found that certain demographic factors, including gender, marital status, and place of origin, influenced specific aspects of the tourists' experiences. Additionally, age, nature of employment, occupation, and annual income exhibited significant differences across various study factors. Furthermore, tripography variables,

such as the source of information, travel companions, trip arrangement, and sponsorship, also displayed notable differences concerning several study factors.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

A study was conducted at Mudumalai wildlife tourism using a structured questionnaire. The data was collected from 450 tourists using a convenience sampling technique, and 400 samples were finalized for data analysis and interpretation. The data reveals that the majority of the tourists visiting Mudumalai are male tourists, and around 40% of the tourists are between 26 and 35 years old. The majority of the tourists are married. Mostly, 45% of the tourists are graduates, and little less than half of the tourists are working in the private sector. Nearly 40% of the tourist's annual income is between 1 – 3 lakhs, and around 90% of the tourists are domestic tourists; among the domestic tourists, most of the tourists are from different parts of Tamil Nadu, and 10% of them are foreigners.

The data also reveals the topographic profile of the tourists. The major source of information about Mudumalai is from friends and relatives; the majority of the tourists (65.5%) are travelling with family and 27.3% with friends and relatives. Most of the tourists arranged their trips on their own (59%), and for a few of the tourists (27.3%), it was arranged by their friends and relatives. The majority of the tourists (77.8%) self-sponsored their trips, around 62% of the tourists are first-time visitors, and around 38% of the tourists are repeated visitors. A little more than one-third of the tourists (37.5%) visit Mudumalai for the purpose of wildlife watching, and around 23.8% of the tourists are here to enjoy nature. Nearly half of the tourists used hired vehicles to visit Mudumalai, and 1/4th of the tourists (26.8%) chose a resort type of accommodation. Half of the tourists prefer to stay in Mudumalai for 2 – 3 days. A little less than 40% of the tourists spend 5 – 10 thousand rupees on their trip to Mudumalai.

The independent sample t-test was conducted to analyze the data, and the results showed that gender, marital status, and place of origin have some influence on certain study factors. For example, gender was found to have a difference of opinion in terms of mountain scenery, and marital status showed a difference in visiting elephant camps. Place of origin (domestic vs. international tourists) had significant differences in animal watching, wildlife watching, bird watching, elephant camp visits, and museum visits.

Furthermore, the one-way ANOVA was performed to determine the significant differences between demographic variables and study factors. Age, nature of employment, occupation, and annual income showed substantial differences with most study factors. For example, age and annual income had significant differences with jeep/elephant safari, animal watching/sighting, mountain scenery, wildlife watching, visiting elephant camp, and museum visits.

Similarly, the one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the significant differences between tripography variables and study factors. The results showed that the source of information about Mudumalai, travel companions, trip arrangement, trip sponsorship, and other tripography variables had significant differences with several study factors.

OVERALL CONCLUSION

The paper's core idea relies on investigating the demographic differences between tourists and topographic variables affecting Wildlife tourism. The tourists visiting wildlife tourist destinations are influenced by several factors, including their love for nature, cultural aspects, and lifestyle. Generally, this type of tourist prefers destinations that are less crowded so that they can spend quality time at the destinations. The result of the study shows that the ratio of male tourists is more than that of female tourists. Apparently, from the survey, we can see that tourists are mostly nature lovers.

The overall findings of the paper provide valuable insights into the demographic and tripographic characteristics of tourists visiting Mudumalai, shedding light on factors that shape their preferences and experiences. This information can contribute to the development of targeted strategies and initiatives aimed at enhancing the tourism experience and catering to the specific needs of different tourist segments in Mudumalai.

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